

# Satisfying the Appetite of the Danes

By Hasse Kristensen

**D**ue to shifting demographics and increasing incomes, Danes are changing their eating habits, demanding convenience, freshness, more variety and more specialty items. Organic, health and convenience foods are becoming extremely popular.

## An Affluent Market With Many Outlets

Denmark has a thoroughly modern market economy, its population of 5.3 million having an average annual per capita income of \$28,000.

Danes purchase about 80 percent of their food in supermarkets. And 25 percent of the products in these markets is imported, mainly from other EU (European Union) countries. Denmark's well-developed, highly competitive food manufacturers supply a wide range of pork, poultry, dairy products, seafood, beer, soft drinks and fruits and vegetables. However, in calendar year 2001 the Danes imported some \$2.7 million in consumer-ready foods; the U.S. market share was about 3 percent.

This is an area where U.S. suppliers have an opportunity to make some inroads. The Danes have a favorable image of certain U.S. products. There is growth

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VARIETY IN THEIR FOOD.



potential for branded items and increasing interest in exotic foods from different countries. However, Danish retailers are reluctant to offer products labeled as derived from biotechnology.

COOP Denmark and Danish Supermarket dominate the supermarket sector. Together they have 1,500 stores and control 64 percent of the market. Specialty stores are losing market share to the supermarkets because they do not have economies of scale. Large discount outlets are growing, and every fourth supermarket is a discount store.

Eight wholesalers that are also the country's biggest importers supply most of the Danish retail sector. About 25 individual importers also supply retailers.

## Breaking In

Although the Danish food market is extremely competitive, new products and reasonably priced items have an excellent chance of breaking in. Danish supermarket chains often feature new products in campaigns planned at least six months ahead. Exporters must be prepared to negotiate on prices, discounts, delivery

periods and ordering times.

Most Danish business people speak English. Like many Northern Europeans, the Danes are very direct in their verbal and written communications and have little time to spend on small talk or business lunches or dinners. After a brief introduction, they come straight to the point. The Danes are looking for loyalty in business relationships with long-lasting, solid agreements.

## Import Procedures

For an exporter to comply with import procedures, the assistance of a Danish importer is essential. Consumer products must be labeled in Danish or in a language that differs only slightly from it, such as Norwegian or Swedish. The country of origin must be clearly marked, and measurements must be in metric. Labels must accurately describe the package contents.

Knowledge of specific Danish ingredient requirements is essential, as they differ from those of other EU countries. Details on import and inspection procedures may be found at: [www.fas.usda.gov/itp/ofsts/fairs\\_by\\_country.asp](http://www.fas.usda.gov/itp/ofsts/fairs_by_country.asp) ■

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## Best High-Value Prospects

- Almonds, walnuts, peanuts, pecans and pistachios
- Wines
- Salmon
- Pet food
- Cranberries
- Dried fruits
- Grapefruit
- Organic products

For details, see FAS Report DA2022. To find it on the Web, start at [www.fas.usda.gov](http://www.fas.usda.gov), select **Attaché Reports** and follow the prompts.

